

the ombu, which is planted in front of many of the farm houses, and thence takes short flights in pursuit of insects. From the remarkable structure of its tail, the inhabitants of the country call it scissor-tail; a name very well applied from the manner in which it opens and shuts the forked feathers of its tail. Like all birds thus constructed, (of which the frigate bird offers a most striking example), it has the power of turning very shortly in its flight, at which instant it opens and shuts its tail, sometimes, as it appears, in a horizontal and sometimes in a vertical plane. When on the wing it presents in its general appearance a caricature likeness of the common house swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). The Muscivora, although unquestionably belonging to the family of Muscipidæ manifests in its habits an evident relationship with birds of the fissirostral structure.

SUB-GEN. PYROCEPHALUS, GOULD.

MUSCICAPA. Auct.

MUSCIPETA. Cuv.

TYRANNULA. Swain.

Rostrum capite brevius, rectum, depressum, basi setis numerosis nigris obsessum; mandibulâ superiore emarginatâ, inferiorem obtegente; naribus rotundatis patulis. Caput subcristatum. Alæ longæ; remige prima secundum tertiamque longissimas subæquales fere æquante. Tarsi mediocres, anticæ scutellati; digitis lateralibus inæqualibus, exterior longiore. Cauda mediocris quadrata.

Mr. Gould observes, that "the males of nearly all the members of this group (which may be considered either as a distinct genus or sub-genus of Myiobius), have the crown of the head and greater part of the under surface scarlet. Four species were obtained.—*Pyrocephalus parvirostris*, (Gould), and *Muscicapa coronata*, (Auct.), may be taken as types.

1. PYROCEPHALUS PARVIROSTRIS. Gould.

Plate VI.

Le Churrinehe, Azara. No. 177.

P. suprà fuscus; capite et subtus nitidè puniceis; rectricibus exterioribus tectricumque et secundariorum apicibus griseo-marginatis.

Long. tot. $5\frac{3}{4}$ unc.; alæ, $13\frac{1}{2}$; caudæ, $2\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $\frac{1}{2}$; rostri, $\frac{1}{2}$.

Crown of the head, crest, and all the under surface, bright scarlet; the remainder

of the plumage, deep brown; the outer tail-feathers on each side, and the edges of the secondaries and wing-coverts, margined with grey.

Habitat, La Plata, (October.)

This species differs from *Pyr. coronatus* or *Muscicapa coronata*, of authors, chiefly in its size; in other respects it is very similar. The admeasurements of the latter, for comparison (as given me by Mr. G. R. Gray), are: total length, 5 inches and 8 lines; bill, between 9 and 10 lines; wings, 3 inches and 2 lines; tail, 2 inches and 7 lines; tarsi, 7 or 8 lines.

During the summer, this bird was common both near Buenos Ayres and Maldonado; but at the latter place, I did not see one in the months of May, June, July, (winter) and therefore, no doubt it is a bird of passage, migrating southward during the summer from Brazil. The birds of this and the allied genera, correspond very closely in their habits to certain of the Sylviadæ of Europe; some of the species frequenting bushes, like the black-cap, (*Sylvia atricapilla*); others more usually the ground, as the robin (*Sylvia rubecula*) or hedge-sparrow (*Accentor modularis*). Another group (*Synallaxis*, &c.) represent those European Sylviæ, which frequent reeds.

2. PYROCEPHALUS OBSCURUS. Gould.

P. lividus rufotinctus; præcipuè in fronte ventrequè.

Long. tot. $5\frac{1}{2}$ unc.; alæ, $3\frac{1}{2}$; caudæ, $2\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $\frac{1}{2}$; rostri, $\frac{1}{2}$.

All the plumage chocolate-brown, tinged with red, the latter colour predominating on the forehead and lower part of the abdomen; bill and tarsi, black.

A single specimen was obtained, and it would appear to be either an immature bird or a female.

Habitat, Lima, Peru. (August.)

3. PYROCEPHALUS NANUS. Gould.

PLATE VII.

P. fuscus; rectricum exteriorum marginibus omniumque et secundariorum apicibus nitidè griseo-brunneis.

Femina, brunnea; gutture griseo-albo; corpore subtus pallidè flavescens; pectoris laterumque plumis in medio brunneo-striatis.

Long. tot. $4\frac{1}{2}$ unc.; alæ, $2\frac{1}{2}$; caudæ, $2\frac{1}{2}$; tarsi, $\frac{1}{2}$; rostri, $\frac{1}{2}$.

Male.

Crown of the head, crest, and all the under surface, scarlet; back, wings, and